

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for managing telephonic communications, comprising:  
an electronic device configured to communicate with a television  
programming source and a telephone network;  
a television coupled to said electronic device for displaying television  
programming from said television programming source;  
a telephone coupled to said electronic device for receiving telephone  
calls from said telephone network, said electronic device  
including a phone mute manager that controls a telephone mute  
mode that may be activated to mute telephone ringing when  
receiving said telephone calls.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein said electronic device is implemented as  
a settop box device.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein a phone manager notifies said phone  
mute manager that an incoming call has been detected, said phone mute  
manager responsively muting a telephone ringing function of said telephone  
so that said audio programming from said television is not interrupted by  
said incoming call.
4. The system of claim 3 wherein said phone mute manager generates and  
transmits a ring mute signal to said telephone when said phone manager  
notifies said phone mute manager that said incoming call has been detected.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein a system user utilizes said electronic  
device as an answering machine to record an incoming call in order to listen  
to said incoming call at a later time.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein a system user may utilize said electronic device as a hand-free telephone device to answer an incoming call by utilizing a phone manager, speakers of said television, and a microphone device coupled to said electronic device.

5

7. The system of claim 1 wherein said electronic device functions in a caller ID mode at the same time as operating in said TV mute mode.

8. A system for managing telephonic communications, comprising:  
10 an electronic device configured to communicate with a television programming source and a telephone network;  
a television coupled to said electronic device for displaying television programming from said television programming source;  
a telephone coupled to said electronic device for receiving telephone  
15 calls from said telephone network, said electronic device including a TV mute manager for controlling a television mute mode that may be activated to mute audio programming on said television when receiving said telephone calls.

20 9. The system of claim 8 wherein said electronic device is implemented as a settop box device.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein a phone manager of said electronic device detects an incoming call of said telephone calls from said telephone  
25 network, said phone manager then notifying said TV mute manager that said incoming call has been detected.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein said TV mute manager mutes said audio programming on said television after said phone manager notifies said  
30 TV mute manager that said incoming call has been detected.

12. The system of claim 11 wherein said TV mute manager generates and transmits an audio mute signal to said television in order to mute said audio programming.

5 13. The system of claim 11 wherein said phone manager of said electronic device instructs said telephone to ring after said audio programming has been muted so that a system user is notified about said incoming call.

10 14. The system of claim 8 wherein a system user utilizes said electronic device as an answering machine to record an incoming call in order to listen to said incoming call at a later time.

15 15. The system of claim 8 wherein a system user utilizes said electronic device as a hand-free telephone device to answer an incoming call by utilizing a phone manager, speakers of said television, and a microphone device coupled to said electronic device.

16. A system for managing telephonic communications, comprising:  
20 an electronic device configured to communicate with a television programming source and a telephone network;  
a television coupled to said electronic device for displaying television programming from said television programming source;  
a telephone coupled to said electronic device for receiving telephone calls from said telephone network, said electronic device  
25 including a caller ID manager that controls a caller ID mode that may be activated to display caller identifications on said television when receiving said telephone calls.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein said electronic device is implemented  
30 as a settop box device.

18. The system of claim 16 wherein a phone manager of said electronic device detects an incoming call of said telephone calls from said telephone network, said phone manager then notifying said caller ID manager that said incoming call has been detected.

5

19. The system of claim 18 wherein said caller ID manager displays an appropriate one of said caller identifications on a portion of a screen of said television after said phone manager notifies said caller ID manager that said incoming call has been detected.

10

20. The system of claim 19 wherein said caller identification includes at least one of a caller name, a caller telephone number, and an incoming call icon.

15 21. The system of claim 19 wherein said phone manager of said electronic device instructs said telephone to ring after said caller ID has been displayed on said television so that a system user may screen said incoming call.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein said caller ID manager displays said  
20 caller identification on a display on said electronic device after said phone manager of said electronic device instructs said telephone to ring.

23. The system of claim 16 wherein a system user may utilize said  
electronic device as a hand-free telephone device to answer said incoming call  
25 by utilizing a phone manager, speakers of said television, and a microphone device coupled to said electronic device.

24. The system of claim 16 wherein said system utilizes said caller ID mode at the same time as utilizing a TV mute mode.

30

25. The system of claim 16 wherein a system user utilizes said electronic device as an answering machine to record an incoming call in order to listen to said incoming call at a later time.

5 26. A method for managing telephonic communications, comprising the steps of:

communicating with a television programming source and a telephone network by utilizing an electronic device;

10 displaying television programming from said television programming source on a television that is coupled to said electronic device;

receiving telephone calls from said telephone network with a telephone coupled to said electronic device, said electronic device including a TV mute manager for controlling a television mute mode, said electronic device further including a caller ID manager that controls a caller ID mode, said electronic device also including a phone mute manager that controls a telephone mute mode.

20 27. The method of claim 26 wherein said electronic device is implemented as a settop box device.

28. The method of claim 26 wherein said TV mute manager controls a television mute mode that may be activated to mute audio programming on said television when receiving said telephone calls.

25 29. The method of claim 26 wherein said caller ID manager controls a caller ID mode that may be activated to display caller identifications on said television when receiving said telephone calls.

30 30. The method of claim 26 wherein said phone mute manager controls a telephone mute mode that may be activated to mute telephone ringing when receiving said telephone calls.

31. The method of claim 26 wherein said TV mute manager mutes said audio programming on said television after said phone manager notifies said TV mute manager that said incoming call has been detected.

5 32. The method of claim 31 wherein said phone manager of said electronic device instructs said telephone to ring after said audio programming has been muted so that said system user is notified about said incoming call.

10 33. The method of claim 26 wherein a phone manager of said electronic device detects an incoming call of said telephone calls from said telephone network, said phone manager then notifying said caller ID manager that said incoming call has been detected.

15 34. The method of claim 33 wherein said caller ID manager displays an appropriate one of said caller identifications on a portion of a screen of said television after said phone manager notifies said caller ID manager that said incoming call has been detected.

20 35. The method of claim 34 wherein said phone manager of said electronic device instructs said telephone to ring after said caller ID has been displayed on said television so that said system user may screen said incoming call.

25 36. The method of claim 26 wherein a system user utilizes said electronic device as a hand-free telephone device to answer an incoming call by utilizing a phone manager, speakers of said television, and a microphone device coupled to said electronic device.

37. The method of claim 26 wherein said electronic device utilizes said caller ID mode at the same time as utilizing said TV mute mode.

30

38. The method of claim 26 wherein a phone manager notifies said phone mute manager that an incoming call has been detected, said phone mute manager responsively muting a telephone ringing function of said telephone so that audio programming from said television is not interrupted by said incoming call.

39. The method of claim 26 wherein a system user utilizes said electronic device as an answering machine to record said incoming call in order to listen to an incoming call at a later time.

10

40. A computer-readable medium comprising program instructions for managing telephonic communications by performing the steps of:  
communicating with a television programming source and a telephone network by utilizing an electronic device;  
15 displaying television programming from said television programming source on a television that is coupled to said electronic device;  
receiving telephone calls from said telephone network with a telephone coupled to said electronic device, said electronic device including a TV mute manager for controlling a television mute mode, said  
20 electronic device further including a caller ID manager that controls a caller ID mode, said electronic device also including a phone mute manager that controls a telephone mute mode.

25

30

41. A system for managing telephonic communications, comprising:  
means for communicating with a television programming source and a  
telephone network;  
means for displaying television programming from said television  
5 programming source;  
means for receiving telephone calls from said telephone network, said  
means for communicating including TV mute means for  
controlling a television mute mode, said means for  
communicating further including caller ID means for controlling  
10 a caller ID mode, said means for communicating also including  
phone mute means for controlling a telephone mute mode.